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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [AG](#)  
SUBJECT: GAZA: ALGERIAN DEMARCHE TO UNSC MEMBERS ON ARAB  
LEAGUE AND ALGERIAN POSITIONS

REF: A. 08 ALGIERS 1340  
[1](#)B. 08 ALGIERS 1350

Classified By: DCM Thomas F. Daughton; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The Algerian MFA summoned us and other UN Security Council member missions separately on January 4 to deliver a demarche on the Arab League position developed at the December 31 Cairo ministerial, and to lay out the Algerian position on the situation in Gaza. The MFA informed us that an Arab League ministerial delegation would be heading to New York shortly to present its position to the UN Security Council, and asked that the U.S. receive and hear the delegation. The MFA made clear that Algeria opposed both the "extremism of Hamas and the extremism of Israel," and stressed that violence would not bring a solution. With public anger on the rise throughout the region (ref A), the current situation served only to feed terrorism around the world and exacerbate security challenges within Algeria. The Algerian and Arab League positions emphasized an immediate end to hostilities, the reopening of crossing points for the transit of people and aid in and out of Gaza, action by the UNSC, and most important, political pressure to work for Palestinian reconciliation as a first step towards getting the peace process back on track. The MFA also noted that Algeria was providing a significant amount of bilateral humanitarian aid in what President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has called an "air bridge," which would continue in parallel to financial contributions to a special relief fund administered by the Arab League. END SUMMARY.

REVOLVING DOOR DEMARCHEES  
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[1](#)2. (C) MFA Director General (A/S equivalent) for Political Affairs and International Security Boudjemaa Delmi led the demarche, flanked by Abdelfetah Ziani, acting DG for Arab Affairs and North America Director Abdellah Laouari. Delmi opened the meeting with DCM and PolEc chief by explaining that Algeria was demarching UN Security Council members to convey the Arab League and Algerian positions, as Algeria was worried about the silence and "passivity" of the international community over the violence in Gaza. As we were leaving, we passed delegations from the French and Russian embassies waiting their turn to receive the same demarche. In addition to the verbal demarche, Delmi also provided us with a non-paper in French (Embassy's informal translation appears below).

ARAB LEAGUE HEADING TO NEW YORK  
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[1](#)3. (C) Delmi stated that the Cairo Arab League ministerial meeting had decided to send a delegation to New York to present a common position and press for Security Council

action. Delmi asked for U.S. support to ensure that the delegation was received and heard, and stressed the need to have the U.S. participate in pushing the rival Palestinian leaderships towards reconciliation. This, he said, was the first step in getting the peace process back on track. The Palestinian Authority, in Algeria's view, was now facing a situation it could no longer control. The agreements necessary for a peaceful solution must therefore be pressed and guaranteed by the international community, with pressure brought to bear on both Hamas and Israel. Even Hamas, Delmi asserted, realizes that violence is not in its interest. Delmi said that Israel could eliminate Hamas' leaders, but could not eliminate Hamas as a political movement. In his view, there was "no logic" to the Israeli undertaking. Hamas must be considered part of the solution, he noted, even though Algeria and many other countries had no sympathy for Hamas and condemned its brand of extremism. Delmi said Israel's claim to self-defense was negated by the disproportionate scale of its response, and that true security could only come from the peace process.

14. (C) Delmi described what the Arab League hoped to see from the UNSC: an immediate end to hostilities; the reopening of crossing points for the transit of people and aid in and out of Gaza; a lifting of the Israeli embargo; and political pressure to work for Palestinian reconciliation as a first step towards getting the peace process back on track. DCM noted that any Security Council intervention would be considerably more productive if it came in the context of seeking to implement a sustainable cease-fire agreement. He urged Algeria to continue to play a constructive role within

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the Arab League to focus the League's attention on pursuit of a durable cease-fire over condemnation of one party. Delmi did not disagree, but stressed that the "cruelty" of Israeli acts was making re-establishment of confidence in the region extremely difficult.

A GLOBAL DEMARCHE AGAINST TERROR  
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15. (C) Delmi explained that Algeria saw its demarche as global, since popular frustration over the violence fed terrorism around the world. The Middle East Peace Process, he said, was one way of fighting the global war on terrorism. He echoed MFA Secretary General Madjid Bouguerra's remarks to the Ambassador (ref B) that Gaza had put the Algerian government in a difficult position with regard to angry popular opinion. "We face pressure," Delmi said, in the form of demonstrations and protests, which have flared up since the beginning of the year. He repeated that Algeria condemned both Hamas extremism and Israeli extremism, and said that neither one would provide a solution.

WE EXPECT A LOT FROM YOU  
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16. (C) Algeria expected a lot from the U.S, Delmi said-- more than it did from other countries. This, he said, was due to U.S. values of democracy and tolerance along with U.S. goals of non-proliferation and counter-terrorism. Although Algeria's Gaza demarche was directed at a variety of countries, "some countries have more responsibility than others." Algeria's goals, as expressed by Bouteflika and Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci, were simply peace and the protection of civilians. "We do not pretend to be more Palestinian than the Palestinians," Delmi said.

THE ALGERIAN AIR BRIDGE  
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17. (C) Delmi said that the 61 tons of initial food and medical aid (ref B) Algeria had sent to Gaza was just the beginning, with additional shipments on the way as part of what President Bouteflika has called an "air bridge" to Gaza.

The air bridge was an independent Algerian effort outside the context of the Arab League, he explained, although Delmi said the Arab League also had a special relief fund to which member states were contributing. In response to our solicitation of support for UNRWA's flash appeal of USD 34 million over the next four months, Delmi said that he did not know whether Algeria would support UNRWA, but he made clear that Algeria saw its response to the urgent humanitarian need in Gaza in terms of supplies rather than a financial contribution. Delmi added that the air bridge also allowed for the possibility of bringing wounded Gazans to Algerian hospitals for medical care, and that upcoming shipments to Gaza would continue to bring food and medicine in addition to mobile medical facilities. Delmi said that Algeria was committed to the relief effort, and "would respond as long as there is need."

#### EGYPTIAN LOGISTICS RESOLVED

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18. (C) When we asked whether Algeria was still facing obstacles from the Egyptians to getting supplies into Gaza (ref B), Delmi explained that the two initial problems had both been resolved. The first issue, he said, had to do with inventories of exactly what entered Gaza, while the second had to do with planning flight arrivals and departures at northern Sinai's tiny El Arish airport. Delmi said that Algerian shipments were now being sent with clear inventory lists to reassure the Egyptians, and schedules of international relief flights into El Arish were much more organized than they had been in the initial days of the recent violence.

#### THE ARAB LEAGUE AND ALGERIAN POSITIONS

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19. (C) Delmi stuck closely to the text of a non-paper containing both the Arab League and Algerian positions, which he said he was providing to all countries receiving the demarche. Embassy's informal translation of the non-paper follows:

BEGIN INFORMAL TRANSLATION:

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The Israeli Attacks on Gaza:

Reactions of Arab Ministers and Elements of Algeria's position

Elements from the Resolution of the Arab League's Ministerial Council:

Further to its extraordinary session on 31 December 2008, the Council of the States of the Arab League has adopted a resolution whose main elements are as follows:

1. Very strong condemnation of the Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip;

2. Requests Israel to stop immediately its military operations;

3. Condemnation of the embargo imposed by Israel on the Palestinian people that resulted in the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza;

4. Requests an extraordinary session of the UN Security Council to demand Israel immediately to stop this aggression, lift the embargo, reopen crossing points, stop the policy of collective punishment, and provide for the international protection of the Palestinian people as well as a mechanism to follow-up on these obligations to reach reprieve;

5. The continuation by Arab States of their emergency humanitarian aid to Gaza;

¶6. Is very pleased about Egypt's opening of the Rafah crossing for humanitarian reasons and its availability to take measures to keep it open per the 2005 agreement;

¶7. Requests the Palestinian factions initiate serious action in order to achieve Palestinian unity and reconciliation which constitutes the guarantee to recover the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people;

¶8. Reaffirms its support to the Palestinian Authority to face the consequences of this attack and overcome its effects;

¶9. The constitution of an Arab Ministerial Committee made up of a certain number of member countries of the Peace Initiative Arab Ministerial Committee to work on the follow-up to this resolution at the Security Council level.

The Algerian Position:

¶1. The mass crimes committed by the Israeli army, its actions against civilians, old people, women and children do not allow the conscience of any human being to remain insensitive in the face of the extreme cruelty of these crimes at a time when the Muslim and Christian world celebrate the new year;

¶2. Algeria was among the first countries to condemn this aggression. It has expressed its indignation and its condemnation of this aggression and has called upon the international community for an immediate end to this attack and international protection of the Palestinian people, as well as its complete readiness to provide any possible help to the Palestinian people. In this framework, Algeria has dispatched two humanitarian assistance aircraft, and a third one loaded with medication is currently awaiting authorization from the Egyptian authorities.

¶3. At the national level, a sharp reaction has been noted from political parties, civil society organizations, and associations expressing their compassion, solidarity, and support for the Palestinian people in the face of this terrible hardship that they are currently suffering, in addition to the denunciation and disapproval of the Israeli attack on Gaza.

¶4. The Algerian position contains the following elements:

a. The increase in Arab efforts to stop this aggression and pressure more powerful states in the international arena to apply pressure on Israel in this regard;

b. The immediate lifting of the embargo on Gaza;

c. The reopening of crossing points;

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d. The achievement of Palestinian national reconciliation;

e. The continuation of humanitarian aid by Arab countries to the Palestinian people to enable them to resist and face this hardship.

END INFORMAL TRANSLATION  
PEARCE